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Atari Online News, Etc.  
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~ Facebook Busts Robber! ~ Users Say No to Edge! ~ PH PDF Maker beta 3!

-\* Beware of Fake USB Chargers! \*-  
-\* U.S. Spending Billions on Old Tech! \*-  
-\* Facebook Sued for Illegal Message Scanning \*-

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->From the Editor's Keyboard "Saying it like it is!"  
"\*\*\*\*\*"

It was a nice long holiday weekend even though both my wife and I worked through a lot of it. And, unfortunately for me, there were no steaks cooked on the grill. I'll have to make up for that this weekend, if the weather holds up!

With the "shortened" week, it's been fairly quiet on the news front. There's plenty to include in this week's issue, but as far as exciting news to relate - not much. We are starting to see more of the Donald vs. Hillary barbs start flying, but really nothing that we all can't anticipate. And Hillary is walking around like she's got everything wrapped up! Don't count out Bernie Sanders just yet; he's still full of surprises!

Until next time...

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## FireBee News Update

By Fred Horvat

Not much has been going on with me and the FireBee the past few weeks. My schedule was full with work and personal obligations. During this time I did not even turn on the FireBee at all. This week I took the FireBee out of the basement at the one desk it was at and brought it upstairs into my office and attached it to an open port on my USB KVM (Keyboard Mouse Video) Adapter. I have a 4-port adapter that I can connect four computers to and share the same Monitor, Mouse, and Keyboard with. I tested the FireBee out and it worked just fine on the KVM. An added bonus of having it in my office besides the opportunity of using it more is that in my office I have a larger monitor. In the basement I had the FireBee attached to a Dell 15 inch LCD monitor with a resolution of 1024x768. In my Office I have a Dell 20 inch LCD monitor with a resolution of 1680x1050. So it is a big improvement in seeing more on the display while using the FireBee. My goal now that I have the FireBee in my office and have more of an opportunity to

use it is to install EasyMiNT 1.19 again from scratch and try and get that working properly and start over again with installing N.AES 2.0 in place of XaAES. It has been so long since I worked on either one of the projects that I forgot where I left off.

Then at the end of June or beginning of July I will have my One Year with my FireBee Report.

Some news on the FireBee from the FireBee Web Site.

Scheduled Delivery Date of the 2nd Series 2016-05-03:

End of last week Medusa Computer Systems got the final delivery date ultimately confirmed by the assembling company. The FireBee PCBs of the 2nd series will be supplied to MCS at the 30th of May 2016.

Subsequently the computers will receive a final inspection and testing in Switzerland and will be mounted into the mini-cases and in the order of the preorders piecemeal delivered to you. We will personally come forward to all preordering persons in about 4 to 8 weeks and ask for the final orders (including a CF-Card, if necessary PSUs, etc.) and will request the payment of the computers.

As a matter of course FireBees can furthermore be preordered by you, as we like as at the first series sent far more boards into production than there got preordered.

Until next time.

#### Atari Computer and FireBee News

[http://firebee.org/fb-bin/news?action=full\\_news&idnews=326&lng=EN](http://firebee.org/fb-bin/news?action=full_news&idnews=326&lng=EN)

GEM Sokoban Game

2016-06-01:

A GEM version of the classic puzzle game Sokoban has been released by Peter Lane.

The screenshot shows the program working under MINT+XaAES on a Firebee.

Features:

Contains the 50 classic levels from Thinking Rabbit  
Additional levels can be loaded from a text file  
Unlimited undo  
Total moves and pushes per level recorded and saved  
Size of display can be adapted

See <http://peterlane.info/sokoban.html>

- for downloadable files (there is a separate build for the Firebee,

and for the ST / 68000), and  
- the source code (this program was written on a Firebee using AHCC).

[http://firebee.org/fb-bin/news?action=full\\_news&idnews=320&lng=EN](http://firebee.org/fb-bin/news?action=full_news&idnews=320&lng=EN)

### PH PDF Maker beta 3

2016-05-31:

PH PDF Maker is a new application that brings PDF-creation to your FireBees and Ataris.

You can use it from within you printer drivers and "print" PDFs" from various user applications. Now the Beta 3 is released. You can now use the PH PDF Maker on your Firebee as it is compatible with NVDI (see notes below). New Features in beta 3:

Works with NVDI 3, 4, 5 & SpeedoGDos 5.0c, 5.7.  
True Colour 24-bits graphics support for real life colour reproduction in PDF.  
Selectable output resolution up to 300 dots per inch.  
Select from 12 standard PDF paper sizes for your PDF output.  
Compressed PDF for smaller file size.  
Secured PDF support with password encryption and read/open password.  
Protected PDF support by restriction control for copy, printing and editing.

#### Features from previous version:

Creates PDF file simply by printing from an application via normal GDOS printer settings.  
Support VDI output function for graphics text, outline text, circle, polyline, rectangle and coloured filled area (closed poly line).  
Support Generalized Drawing Primitives (GDP) bar, arc, pieslice, circle and ellipse.  
Support text effects such as bold, italic, outline, underline, rotation, colour, font scaling, superscript and subscript.  
Support VDI colour mapping for supported graphics objects, lines, texts and filled objects.  
Support TrueType fonts for nice font face output.  
Support Latin accents as defined by standard Atari character set (i.e. via keyboard).

NVDI 5 will only be able to render out true colour graphics on the PDF document. Unfortunately, NVDI 5 will only renders a very small portion of text due to some restriction imposed by NVDI 5. This phenomena only happens on NVDI 5, so if you get NVDI 3 or 4 working on the Firebee, you should be able to use the full features of PH PDF maker beta 3. This limitation does not stop you from making true colour graphics PDF on your powerful Firebee using either Papyrus or Atari Works imagecapabilities.

<https://sites.google.com/site/probehouse/download/phsw-Atari-software-downloads?pageReverted=123#T01-PH-PDF>



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## The New Xbox One: Everything We Know About Microsoft's Next Game Console(s)

It used to work like this:

1. Buy a game console.
2. Spend the next five, six, seven, eight years enjoying it, until Microsoft, Sony and Nintendo introduce the next console generation.

Soon, that concept of a "console generation" may be no more. A flurry of rumors suggest that both Sony and Microsoft will introduce new and improved versions of their existing game consoles as soon as this year, and announce them this very month. Sony may introduce the so-called "PlayStation Neo" at E3 in Los Angeles, and as for Microsoft...well, if these rumors are to be believed, Microsoft may have as many as four different Xbox devices to offer.

Here's what the rumor mill tells us about each one.

### Xbox One Slim

The current Xbox One is huge. It makes the rival PS4 look tiny by comparison. But imagine if Microsoft shrunk it down to become the smallest Xbox ever.

According to sources who spoke to Kotaku, Polygon and The Verge, that's exactly what's happening: the Xbox One Slim (not a real name) will be 40% smaller than the current model. It will allegedly be cheaper, too, and yet offer 2TB of storage space - double the capacity of the highest-end Xbox One available now.

Rumor says it'll come with a slightly redesigned Xbox One gamepad, and may natively support 4K televisions as well. We don't have any leaked pictures of the new Xbox yet, but sources believe it's slated to ship in August.

While it's normal for Microsoft, Sony, and Nintendo to release slimmer versions of their consoles during their long lifespans, such as the PS3 Super Slim and Xbox 360 Slim, the next rumor you're about to read is for something much different.

### Xbox One VR

If you wait until late 2017, say some of the same anonymous sources, there could be a much more powerful Xbox One on tap - one that supports virtual reality. The Xbox One VR (also not a real name), codename "Scorpio," is allegedly a beefed-up Xbox One with a new graphics chip that gives the console four times the horsepower. That's enough graphical oomph, reportedly, to power an Oculus Rift VR headset.

Microsoft doesn't have a VR headset of its own, and it denies

interest in making one anytime soon. (The Microsoft HoloLens is not a VR headset, and is likely years away). So it's initially surprising to hear that Microsoft might have an Xbox designed to support virtual reality.

But anonymous sources aren't the only ones who are suggesting that Microsoft might have suddenly taken an advanced interest in VR. A game developer at a "well-known European studio" let slip to Ars Technica that his company was working on an Xbox One VR title for 2017, and the official E3 exhibitor list now has a category for Xbox One Virtual Reality developers.

The Oculus Rift VR headset. Every Rift comes with an Xbox One gamepad.

James Martin/CNET

Besides, Microsoft already had a partnership with Oculus: it provides Xbox One gamepads for every Oculus Rift sold, and is developing a VR version of its mega-popular video game Minecraft for the Oculus platform.

An Xbox One VR sounds like a possible foil for the PlayStation Neo, assuming it exists. It, too, is allegedly a beefed-up console with a new graphics chip expressly designed to support virtual reality - only in Sony's case, it would be powering Sony's own PlayStation VR headgear.

And according to Polygon's sources, that new VR-capable Xbox could be even more powerful than the VR-capable new PlayStation. While leaked documents obtained by our colleagues at Giant Bomb suggest the PlayStation Neo will boast raw performance of roughly 4.14 teraflops, Microsoft's "Scorpio" is allegedly targeting 6 teraflops.

Since today's PlayStation 4 is slightly more powerful than today's Xbox One, it could mean a role reversal for the two consoles.

Xbox One Mini and Stick

If you believe the sources of veteran Microsoft reporter Tom Warren, Microsoft has been working on a pair of Xbox One media streaming devices for years: one a small set-top box to compete with the Apple TV, and the other a HDMI stick more like a Google Chromecast.

And if you believe Brad Sams, another Microsoft reporter who correctly predicted the Xbox One Elite Controller, Microsoft will actually announce both those streaming devices at E3 this year for roughly \$150 (approximately £104 or AU\$208) and \$100 (approximately £69, AU\$138) respectively.

The Xbox One Mini (not a real name) is believed to be a tiny stripped down Xbox that would be able to play lightweight games and apps, taking advantage of the fact that Microsoft is unifying its Windows and Xbox app stores to make some Windows programs available on Xbox and vice versa. Though no rumor has yet corroborated this, it would presumably ditch the Xbox's optical drive.

Meanwhile, the Xbox Stick (yet another made-up name) is allegedly pegged as a way to stream games from an Xbox in one room of your house to a TV in another room using wireless technology. That wouldn't be too much of a stretch, given you can already stream Xbox One games to a Windows 10 PC.

Why four devices? We don't know for sure - but they appear to revolve around a new Microsoft initiative, codename Project Helix, to bring the worlds of Windows and Xbox much closer together.

This March, we learned that Microsoft intends to release every new game it creates for Windows and Xbox simultaneously. One month later, Microsoft announced that it would fulfill its long-standing promise to let the Xbox One run Windows apps - not just games.

Both announcements rely on developers building so-called "universal" apps set of tools and practices dubbed the "Universal Windows Architecture" (UWA).

But Microsoft needs new hardware to get developers excited enough to build those apps in the first place. If Microsoft can tell developers that their UWA apps will run on a host of new devices that consumers are likely to have in their homes, including ones as cheap and portable as HDMI sticks, that could be some serious incentive to build for Microsoft's platform - where Microsoft gets a cut of every sale.

If it works, it could be pretty nice for gamers too: In March, Xbox boss Phil Spencer imagined a future where your game library would never go out of date. Traditionally, each new generation of game consoles isn't "backwards-compatible" with games from previous generations. They typically don't work due to differences in the architecture of the processors inside.

But if Microsoft can get developers to build universal apps that work across different types of hardware, console gamers could enjoy the same benefit as today's PC gamers - whose games just keep looking better, instead of going obsolete, as they upgrade to more powerful processors and graphics cards.

Scroll down for a reverse-chronological look at the latest rumors.

May 31, 2016

CNET: Xbox One gets price cut ahead of expected new models

Microsoft cuts the Xbox One's price to \$299 through June 13 - June 13 just so happens to be the day when Microsoft will hold its E3 press conference.

May 27, 2016

Ars Technica: Developer: We're working on an Xbox One VR game for 2017

A game developer at a "well-known European studio" tells Ars Technica that his company is planning a new VR game for 2017 which will allegedly work with the Xbox One - a console which isn't currently compatible with any VR headsets.

NeoGAF: Official E3 website adds "Xbox One Virtual Reality" filter, 4+ companies register

NeoGAF forum user 00ich discovers that the Entertainment Software Association, which sponsors E3, has specifically created a category for companies building VR software for the Xbox One.

Gamespot: GameStop expecting new console announcements at E3

Tony Bartel, COO of video game retailer GameStop, corroborates the rumors by saying he expects new game consoles to be announced at E3 this year.

May 25, 2016

Kotaku: Sources: Smaller Xbox One coming this year, more powerful Xbox One in 2017

Sources tell Kotaku that Microsoft will release "at least two" new Xbox game consoles over the next two years: a cheaper, smaller version of the current Xbox One with a new 2TB hard drive this year, to be announced at E3, and a more powerful Xbox One next year with a faster GPU capable of supporting the Oculus Rift VR headset.

Polygon: Sources: Xbox One getting huge upgrade in 2017, slim model later this year

Polygon corroborates the Kotaku report with its own anonymous sources, and adds that next year's more powerful Xbox One will be four times as powerful as the current console, with a performance target of 6 teraflops, and is designed to be backwards compatible with all current Xbox One software.

According to Polygon sources, the other cheaper, smaller Xbox One variant will be the smallest Xbox ever made and is scheduled to ship this August with a redesigned controller.

The Verge: Xbox One slim rumored for E3 and more powerful console expected in 2017

Sources tell The Verge that the smaller, cheaper Xbox One mentioned by Kotaku will be 40 percent smaller than the current Xbox One and likely support 4K video playback.

CNET: Microsoft may launch two TV streaming devices at E3

During a video podcast, tech journalist Brad Sams claims that Microsoft is "going to be announcing at least two streaming devices at E3." He describes one of them as a streaming media stick the size of a Google Chromecast for around \$100, and the other as a \$150 to \$175 Apple TV competitor which could play lightweight games.

He also says that Microsoft is experimenting with bringing the Xbox interface to Windows PCs as a replacement for the old Windows Media Center, and that Microsoft may be planning another Xbox for next year with 4K video playback.

The Verge adds that Microsoft has "long been experimenting with a Chromecast-like device that would allow you to stream Xbox One games from a main console in a living room to a second TV

elsewhere in a house."

April 27, 2016

Thurrott.com: Microsoft will announce new hardware at E3

Tech journalist Brad Sams cites "sources within the company" that Microsoft will have a large hardware announcement at E3, and separately that the Xbox One will ship with a new controller with a different color than the current black gamepad.

April 19, 2016

The Verge: Is Microsoft about to launch an upgraded Xbox One?

The Verge's Tom Warren reports that Microsoft has been testing "a variety of prototype Xbox devices" using beefed-up PC components to make them faster.

April 12, 2016

NeoGAF: New Xbox One wireless chip discovered in FCC filings

In the Federal Communication Commission's public database, NeoGAF forum member ekim discovers that Microsoft is attempting to certify new Wi-Fi radio modules, likely for a new revision of the Xbox One.

March 30, 2016

CNET: The Xbox is finally becoming a Windows PC. Do you care?

Microsoft confirms that it will unify the Windows 10 and Xbox One app stores, allowing Xbox game consoles to act even more like Windows computers by running the same applications.

March 4, 2016

Gamespot: Xbox boss clarifies console hardware upgrade comments

Xbox boss Phil Spencer clarifies that future Xbox consoles won't become upgradable PCs which require a screwdriver to replace their components. Instead, he meant that it won't necessarily take the seven to eight years of a typical console cycle before the Xbox becomes more powerful.

March 1, 2016

Gamespot: Possible Xbox One hardware upgrade in the pipeline, says Phil Spencer

At a media event attended by CNET, Xbox boss Phil Spencer hints that Microsoft might not wait for a new generation of game consoles to introduce new hardware, and that the hardware might be upgradable.

CNET: Don't hold your breath for an Xbox VR headset

Xbox boss Phil Spencer explains why Microsoft believes it doesn't need to build a VR headset to go with its Xbox One game console.

CNET: You won't need an Xbox to play Microsoft's next generation of games

Microsoft developers reveal to CNET that the company's future in-house games will arrive on Xbox and Windows on the very same

day.

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->A-ONE Gaming Online      -      Online Users Growl & Purr!
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Atari Vault - Update #3 - Now Available on Steam OS!

Dear Fans,

Today, we are proud to announce that Atari Vault is Now Available on Steam OS! For the first time, players can experience these renowned games with the benefit of current technology, including global leaderboards, multiplayer modes, and full controller support on Steam OS.

With the release of Atari Vault on Linux-based SteamOS, players who purchased a Steam Machine or run a SteamOS powered machine can now play the game and relive or experience for the first time the titles that comprise the foundation of the modern gaming industry. Additionally, owners of the Windows version of the game will gain access to the SteamOS version through Steam for no additional charge via SteamPlay. Featuring games like Asteroids, Centipede, Missile Command, Tempest, Warlords, and many more, Atari Vault combines the nostalgia of arcades and the Atari 2600 with modern gaming capabilities.

Be sure to also take a look at our last update for the game to see what's been added and improved since launch across all platforms!

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A-ONE's Headline News  
The Latest in Computer Technology News  
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

# US Government Is Spending Billions on Old Tech That Barely Works

The US government spent most of its annual IT budget last year on maintaining systems that, in some cases, are decades-old - largely because of an "if it ain't broke" mentality.

But the problem is that some of the tech is broken, vulnerable, and out of date - and it's starting to reach a breaking point.

A report from the Government Accountability Office (GAO) shed light on how big the problem is. In a report published Wednesday, the federal government spent \$80 billion on IT systems in 2015, but \$61 billion was spent on operations and maintenance. The rest was on development and enhancement, such as purchasing new systems or expanding existing ones.

Some of the most important networks and systems today are woefully outdated.

Here's how bad it is:

A system used by the Justice Dept. to monitor security and custody levels and inmate population information still uses COBOL, a programming language that dates back to the post-World War era. A system that tracks incidents involving hazardous materials used by the Transport Dept. is more than four decades old. A number of servers at Homeland Security still run Windows Server 2003, which hasn't been supported for almost a year, but these servers won't be transitioned to federal systems until 2018 because of backwards-compatibility issues.

And, a nuclear weapons coordination system used by the Defense Dept. is still running on an IBM Series/1 computer - a machine that dates back to the 1970s and uses 8-inch floppy disks.

On the bright side, the Defense Dept. told the oversight watchdog that it has plans to update some of its nuclear systems by the end of 2017.

Rep. Jason Chaffetz (R-UT, 3rd), the chairman of the House Government and Oversight Committee, said in a hearing shortly after the report's release that the government's IT spending "largely doesn't work."

The situation is so bad that Chaffetz said some government agencies are still running Windows 3.1, an operating system that dates back more than two decades.

Commerce, Defense, Treasury, Health and Human Services, and Veterans Affairs were named in the report as using the outdated Microsoft software.

The agency officials summoned to the committee argued that some of the older systems still work - and any upgrades have been pushed to the bottom of the pile in favor of other IT spending.

With those older systems, the report argued that many government agencies are vulnerable to security vulnerabilities and flaws because the vendors no longer provide support for old software and systems.

For the upcoming 2017 fiscal year, the Obama administration asked for an 11 percent increase to \$89 billion for the administration's annual IT budget.

Last year, a white hat hacker developed a cheap Arduino-based device that looked and functioned just like a generic USB mobile charger, but covertly logged, decrypted and reported back all keystrokes from Microsoft wireless keyboards.

Dubbed KeySweeper, the device included a web-based tool for live keystroke monitoring and was capable of sending SMS alerts for typed keystrokes, usernames, or URLs, and work even after the nasty device is unplugged because of its built-in rechargeable battery.

Besides the proof-of-concept attack platform, security researcher Samy Kamkar, who created KeySweeper, also released instructions on how to build your own USB wall charger.

Now, it seems like hackers and criminal minds find this idea smart.

The FBI has issued a warning advisory for private industry partners to look out for highly stealthy keyloggers that quietly sniff passwords and other input data from wireless keyboards.

According to the advisory, blackhat hackers have developed their custom version of KeySweeper device, which "if placed strategically in an office or other location where individuals might use wireless devices", could allow criminals to steal:

- Intellectual property
- Trade secrets
- Personally identifiable information
- Passwords
- Other sensitive information

Since KeySweeper looks almost identical to USB phone chargers that are ubiquitous in homes and offices, it lowers the chances of discovering the sniffing device by a target.

However, according to a Microsoft spokesperson, customers using Microsoft Bluetooth-enabled keyboards are protected against KeySweeper threat. Also, its wireless keyboards manufactured after 2011 are also protected, as they use the Advanced Encryption Standard (AES) encryption technology.

So, the primary method of defense is either to restrict the use of wireless keyboards, or to use keyboards that use the Advanced Encryption Standard (AES) encryption technology.

Although the FBI made no mention of malicious KeySweeper sniffers being found in the wild, the advisory indicates the information about the KeySweeper threat was obtained through an undescribed "investigation."

"The primary method of defense is for corporations to restrict the use of wireless keyboards. Since the KeySweeper requires over-the-air transmission, a wired keyboard will be safe from this type of attack." FBI advised.

## Facebook Sued for Illegally Scanning Users' Private Messages

Facebook is facing a class-action lawsuit in Northern California over allegations that the company systematically scans its users' private messages on the social network without their consent and makes the profit by sharing the data with advertisers and marketers.

According to the lawsuit filing, Facebook might have violated federal privacy laws by scanning users' private messages.

Facebook routinely scans the URLs within users' private messages for several purposes like anti-malware protection and industry-standard searches for child pornography, but it has been claimed that the company is also using this data for advertising and other user-targeting services.

The plaintiffs, Matthew Campbell, and Michael Hurley argue that the Facebook is scanning and collecting URLs-related data in a searchable form, violating both the Electronic Communications Privacy Act and California Invasion of Privacy Act, reported the Verge.

Facebook argues that the company scans users' private messages in bulk, and maintains the URL records in an anonymized way, which is only used in aggregate form.

However, according to a technical analysis done on behalf of the plaintiffs, each URL-related message is stored in "Titan," a private message database that displays the date and time the message was sent, along with the user IDs of both the sender and the recipient.

However, it turns out that Facebook used this practice in past, but the company claimed to have stopped such practices a long time ago.

"We agree with the court's finding that the alleged conduct did not result in any actual harm and that it would be inappropriate to allow plaintiffs to seek damages on a class-wide basis," a Facebook spokesperson told CNET.

"The remaining claims relate to historical practices that are entirely lawful, and we look forward to resolving those claims on the merits."

However according to the plaintiffs, Facebook is still continuing to collect links from users' private messages.

"Facebook's source code not only reveals that Facebook continues to acquire URL content from private messages, but that it also continues to make use of the content it acquires."

Meanwhile, you can check out the lawsuit [here](#). The lawsuit was originally filed in 2012 and for now, the case is expected to proceed.

Plaintiffs have until June 8 to file an amended complaint,

following a scheduled conference toward the end of the month.

### The Pirate Bay Sails Back to Its .org Domain

Faced with a new ruling from a Swedish court that saw its Swedish ThePirateBay.se and PirateBay.se domains confiscated, torrent site The Pirate Bay is moving back to where it first started in 2003, ThePirateBay.org.

The site is currently redirecting all traffic from the above two domains back to its .org home. The Pirate Bay had originally moved to .se in 2012, before making moves to more obscure domains, such as .sx and .ac. It would eventually return to .se in 2015. The alternative domains the site was using have all been seized.

While the moves were meant as a way to avoid copyright lawsuit-related closures, the return back to .org could see potential legal action from the US, as the registry that manages the top level .org domains is based in Virginia.

Pirate Bay co-founder Fredrik Neij is planning to appeal the Swedish court's decision to confiscate the .se domains.

### Facebook Reportedly Plans To Make It Impossible for The Police To Read Your Messages

Facebook is planning to introduce optional end-to-end encryption for its popular Messenger app, according to a new report from The Guardian.

The change would mean that if the user decides to switch encryption on for a message thread, the messages would be encoded in a way that makes them indecipherable to anyone who isn't either the sender or the messages' intended recipient including Facebook itself and law enforcement.

It's reportedly due to launch in the coming months.

Facebook hasn't officially confirmed its encryption plans, with The Guardian's report based off three anonymous sources close to the project.

A Facebook spokesman told Business Insider: We don't comment on rumour or speculation.

The move would not be totally surprising, given the tech industry's increasing focus on security amid a broad debate over consumer use of encryption and the challenges it presents.

Apple was one of the earlier big tech companies to bring strong encryption to consumers. Its iMessage messaging service is end-to-end encrypted, meaning the company can't scan your communications, and [it] wouldn't be able to comply with a wiretap order even if [it] wanted to. (And Apple devices running iOS 8 and

onwards also have full-disk encryption, preventing Apple or anyone else from accessing the data saved on a device without the correct passcode.)

At the start of April 2016, WhatsApp the wildly popular messaging app owned by Facebook turned on end-to-end encryption for its more than one billion users. Building secure products actually makes for a safer world, (though) many people in law enforcement may not agree with that, cofounder Brian Acton told Wired at the time of the announcement.

Even Google is now at it. The Californian search and mobile announced a new chat app called Allo at its I/O conference in May. Allo also comes with end-to-end encryption, but users have to choose to switch it on for specific chats, as using it means the sophisticated AI that differentiates the app can no longer work.

In short: By not having encryption, Facebook Messenger is behind the times.

Like Google's Allo, Facebook Messenger's encryption will be opt-in. Facebook is increasingly emphasising the utility of automated bots in Messenger but if end-to-end encryption were enabled for all conversations, these bots wouldn't be able to function.

So adding encryption as an optional extra placates users who are looking for additional security, and helps Messenger keep up with its competitors, while not hampering intended functionality for the majority.

But the move once official may draw the ire of some in law enforcement, who have grown exasperated and angry over the consumer technology industry's widespread adoption of encryption. When Apple first introduced default-on full-disk encryption, it was accused of being the phone of choice for the pedophile, with law enforcement worrying that the encryption will make it harder to gather vital evidence from once-unlocked smartphones.

But the tech companies and privacy advocates counter that strong encryption is vital to safeguard users' privacy, and to protect their data from hackers.

## Google Removes A Chrome Extension That Identified and Tracked Jews

An extension for Google's Chrome browser that let users identify and track suspected Jewish members of the media and entertainment industries has been removed from the Chrome store after the web giant said it breached its rules against promoting hate speech and inciting violence.

The extension, known as Coincidence Detector, identified suspected or confirmed Jews by adding triple parentheses to their names wherever they were referenced online. Its existence was first reported by Mic, a New York-based news site targeted at millennials, in a post on Thursday that described how neo-Nazis and anti-Semites were using it to target Jews for abuse and

harassment.

In effect, the extension appeared to work as a kind of crowdsourced database, with users recommending or suggesting new additions or correcting and adding to those suggested by others. At the time it was removed, the Coincidence Detector had been downloaded more than 2,700 times and had a database of 8,700 people. It had a rating of five out of five stars, according to Mic.

The name of the Chrome extension appears to have been intended as a reference to anti-Semitic conspiracy theories that Jews somehow dominate the media and entertainment industries, and control them from within to the detriment of society. It was also likely chosen so that it wouldn't raise any red flags inside Google, and appears to have been in use for months, if not longer.

As Mic described in a separate story, the use of two or three brackets around the name of a suspected or confirmed Jewish person is called an echo in right-wing and anti-Semitic groups and communities online, and is a way for such groups to single out Jews in a way that doesn't attract a lot of attention.

The origins of the symbol ((( ))) can be traced to a hardcore, right-wing podcast called The Daily Shoah in 2014. It's known as an echo in the anti-Semitic corners of the alt-right—a new, young, amorphous conservative movement that comprises trolls fluent in internet culture, free speech activists warring against political correctness and earnest white nationalists.

New York Times writer Jonathan Weisman described how he was targeted for online harassment—in many cases by supporters of Donald Trump—after receiving tweets that mentioned his name and included double brackets. One Twitter user described it as a dog whistle or identifier that would alert like-minded people to Weisman's Jewish heritage, and he soon received a number of threatening messages, including photos of the front gates of Auschwitz, a German concentration camp.

Google likely took quick action on the Coincidence Detector extension because it has been criticized for anti-Semitic elements built into its web searches and other features. Last year, a number of groups pointed out that searches for "Who controls Hollywood" suggested an encyclopedia entry on Jews as a result. Google said it was working to fix the problem by adjusting its algorithms.

#### Victim Identifies Armed Robber After Facebook Suggests He Add Him As A Friend

You never know who Facebook's going to suggest you friend.

People with 45 mutual friends? A friend's friend who you loathe?

Or how about this: that guy who pulled a knife on you and stole your car?

The BBC reports that a robber's rip-offs have unravelled after he was spotted on the people you may know list by the victim of a car robbery in Birmingham, UK.

According to the BBC, Detective Constable Rhiannon Daff said the Facebook information was a crucial part of the investigation and the final piece of the jigsaw.

Omar Famuyide, a 21-year-old from Highgate, Birmingham, was jailed last week at the city's Crown Court after a trial found him guilty of robbery, attempted robbery, possession of a firearm and possession of a knife.

The car robbery, it turns out, was only one of a string of crimes.

One of those crimes included forcing entry into a local business known as the Ambassador's Relaxation Suite last July. Along with another man, Famuyide threatened women with a metal bar and a handgun, then fled empty-handed.

A month later, the robber stole a car from a man at knifepoint in Highgate.

The victim recognized Famuyide after Facebook suggested he might know him.

Facebook tries to be helpful by automatically scanning an assortment of data crunchables to fuel its Friend Finder function: mutual friends, work and education data, and imported contacts, be they from Outlook, Gmail, Hotmail, Yahoo, or what have you.

Helpful, and self-serving, useful as it is for growing the network and bolstering Facebook's advertising market.

Back in January, Germany actually said nein! to all that, with the Federal Court of Justice ruling that Friend Finder constituted advertising harassment.

Famuyide coming up as a friend suggestion was reportedly just a coincidence. Heaven knows the odds of having a crook pop up in the suggestion list presented to one of his victims. It sure does help if the two live in the same neighborhood, of course.

He was given a jail sentence of 17 years.

### Raspberry Pi 3 To Get Official Android OS Support

It's fair to say the success of the ARM-powered Raspberry Pi computers have surpassed expectations and have been a godsend to hobbyists, hackers, and students.

If you're one of those people looking for unofficial hacks to install Android OS on a Raspberry Pi device, then stop and wait for the official release.

Raspberry Pi computers have largely been Linux affairs, as several Linux distributions have supported this tiny ARM

computer.

Now, it seems like Raspberry Pi is ready to get official support for one of the most popular mobile operating systems out there: Android.

Google has recently registered the \$35 Raspberry Pi 3 as the newest version of the Raspberry Pi as a new device 'tree' in its Android Open Source Project (AOSP) repository.

If you're not aware, Raspberry Pi is cheap, credit card-sized, single board ARM computer that looks and feels very basic, but could be built into many geeky projects.

What Google is planning for Android and the Pi is unclear. However, once released, Android support for Raspberry Pi 3 would give programmers access to more than 1.5 million apps, allowing them to mess around with their own custom projects too.

Last year at Google I/O developer conference, the company, announced Brillo OS, a lightweight Android-based operating system for low-power devices built on ARM or Intel i.e. the Internet of Things (IoT).

This might be possible that Android support for Raspberry Pi 3 could be part of Project Brillo.

Interested Raspberry Pi enthusiasts should keep an eye on Google's Repository.

### Meet Avalon, Asus's Audacious, Tightly Integrated Vision for the Future of DIY PCs

The PC's DIY hardware ethos is both a blessing and a curse on computing. On one hand, the open ecosystem fuels innovation and serves as a major selling point for enthusiasts. On the other, the basic design of PCs hasn't really changed in decades. You slot motherboards, storage, and various add-in cards into a case and wire them up. That underlying structure helps sustain the universal nature of PC hardware but now Asus Republic of Gamers brand thinks it can do better.

At Computex 2016, Asus ROG showed off its Avalon concept PC, a computer that tightly integrates all aspects of the PC for a redefined design, but still supports the platform's DIY strengths. The end result is a creation largely devoid of wires and something that looks more like a premium stereo system than a traditional computer.

Oh, and Unlike the purely aspirational concepts often seen in the tech industry, this prototype is a working system built on existing technologies that are viable to put into mass production, Asus says. Shots fired, Project Christine.

The Avalon design taps into Asus's expertise in creating virtually every major PC hardware component. The main thrust ties the motherboard more closely to the case itself, rather than having

them exist as two fully individual elements though Asus says That s not to say that boards have to be inexorably tied to specific cases, just that closer collaboration creates interesting opportunities.

One major advantage to that is port flexibility, Asus says. Avalon s motherboard extends right to the front of the case, so various ports and indicators can be built right into the motherboard and appear on the PC s face, rather than needing to be connected to the front panel with extenders and extra cables.

Meanwhile, the rear I/O panels are modular components of their own inside Avalon. In other words, you can swap them out to create a Frankenstein that meets your individual needs, rather than being limited to a selection of ports hardwired into your motherboard, as is the case with traditional PCs. VR rigs require additional USB ports to connect headsets and controllers, workstations often need faster networking and redundant ports, and home-theater PCs can benefit from upgraded audio, says Asus.

The custom 600W power supply Asus created for the Avalon concept PC features an edge connector rather than cabling.

Those rear I/O panels connect to the Avalon s motherboard using a PCI-E-based edge connector. Asus relies on edge connectors throughout to make the Avalon as wire-free and hassle-free as possible; the company even created a 600-watt small form factor power supply for the concept that relies on that simple PCI-E connection rather than the traditional rat s nest of power cables. All power to secondary hardware flows through the motherboard itself.

The bays you see on the front of the Avalon concept PC house hot-swappable storage, which makes switching out SSDs as simple as switching out floppy disks. The storage capabilities reside on a daughter card that connects directly to the motherboard inside.

The Avalon motherboard with various daughter cards connected at the bottom. Funky!

High-powered graphics cards are the one component that still requires additional power cabling inside Avalon, though Asus says it s possible to rework graphic card design to function with edge connectors, instead. GPUs reside in their own compartment at Avalon s outer edge, blowing hot air out through the ventilated edge of the PC.

The motherboard features an integrated backplate with threaded holes so that you can connect aftermarket CPU cooling solutions directly to it. Asus hopes that the voltage regulator modules on the motherboard s underbelly can be connected to the chassis to have the case itself act as a heatsink for the system. That s a trick that some small form factor and silent PC cases already perform and one that plays neatly into the Avalon s integration concept.

As a concept PC, there s no pricing or release date information tied to Avalon, though Asus says it s right on the edge of what s possible. The prototype certainly seems like a compelling

idea, at least in theory, and still manages to embrace DIY potential despite its tighter overall system integration. That said, part of the reason that PCs have stuck to traditional designs for so long is because the usual case-motherboard-power supply-add-in card design works so well, and it resists hardware lock-in. Tying motherboard design so tightly to the case plays well to Asus jack-of-all-trades strengths, for example, but it might leave more specialized hardware vendors like EVGA out in the cold.

## Windows 10 Usage Continues To Rise, But Users Say No to the Edge Browser

Microsoft's aggressive campaign to upgrade older PCs to Windows 10 appears to be working.

That's the inescapable conclusion from the latest data from two commercial web analytics services and the U.S. Government's open analytics program.

For this story, I've gathered the latest data, covering the months of March through May 2016, from Net Applications (aka Net Market Share), StatCounter Global Stats, and the United States Government's Digital Analytics Program (DAP). For the first two, I removed non-Windows operating systems from the data set and then normalized the results so that all the comparisons show the share for each version of Windows based on a population of all Windows PCs.

Rather than rely on the oversimplified bar and pie charts that Net Market Share and StatCounter publish each month, I downloaded the raw data from all three sources and analyzed it carefully.

Remarkably, all three sources are in general agreement. Among the population of Windows-based desktop PCs, laptops, and tablets, Windows 10 usage has doubled in the past six months, with all other versions down noticeably.

The following chart shows the DAP data for November 2015 and May 2016, which measures hundreds of millions of visits per month to public websites. There's no statistical manipulation, as with the commercial analytics services.

Data from the U.S. Government Digital Analytics Program shows Windows 10 usage up, all other versions down.

As you can see, more than 25 percent of all Windows PCs that accessed U.S. Government websites in May were running Windows 10 (the list of websites includes NASA's popular Picture of the Day, National Weather Service forecasts, U.S. passport and immigration services, the Social Security Administration, and the Internal Revenue Service).

According to Net Applications, 9.8 percent of all Windows PCs were running Windows 10 in November 2015. That number is up to 19.4 percent in May 2016.

For StatCounter, the corresponding numbers jumped from 11.9 percent last November to 23.6 percent in May 2016.

Windows 7 usage continues to drop slowly, although all three sources have Windows 7's share at more than half of all Windows PCs in use. According to the DAP numbers, usage of Windows 7 has dropped 4 percent in the past six months and is now below 60 percent. Net Applications and StatCounter show drops of 7 and 6 percent, respectively, with Windows 7 usage measured between 54 and 57 percent worldwide.

And older versions of Windows are finally receding to low single digits, with the DAP data showing that total usage of Windows XP, Windows Vista, and older versions is now well under 5 percent.

A much more interesting story that emerged from a close analysis of the data involves Microsoft Edge, the new default browser in Windows 10. The raw numbers show Edge usage as very small, ranging from 2.5 percent (StatCounter) to 5 percent (DAP). But those numbers are misleading, because they count PCs and mobile devices on which Edge isn't available. Windows 7 users, for example, don't have the option to choose Edge, even if they want to.

Fortunately, through the magic of spreadsheets, I was able to tease out the numbers for Edge usage on Windows 10, the only platform for which it's available. Over the past three months, as Windows 10 usage has risen steadily, the percentage of traffic from Microsoft Edge has dropped slightly, as measured by all three services.

More than 70 percent of Windows 10 users use a browser other than Microsoft Edge.

Regardless of which numbers you use, it's clear that more than three out of four Windows 10 users are choosing an alternative browser, despite Microsoft's best efforts to make Edge the default in Windows 10.

Those numbers may creep up slightly later this year, as the browser continues to mature and especially when support for extensions arrives in this summer's Anniversary Update. But for now, Edge is still in use by only a minority of Windows 10 users.

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